THE GAMER

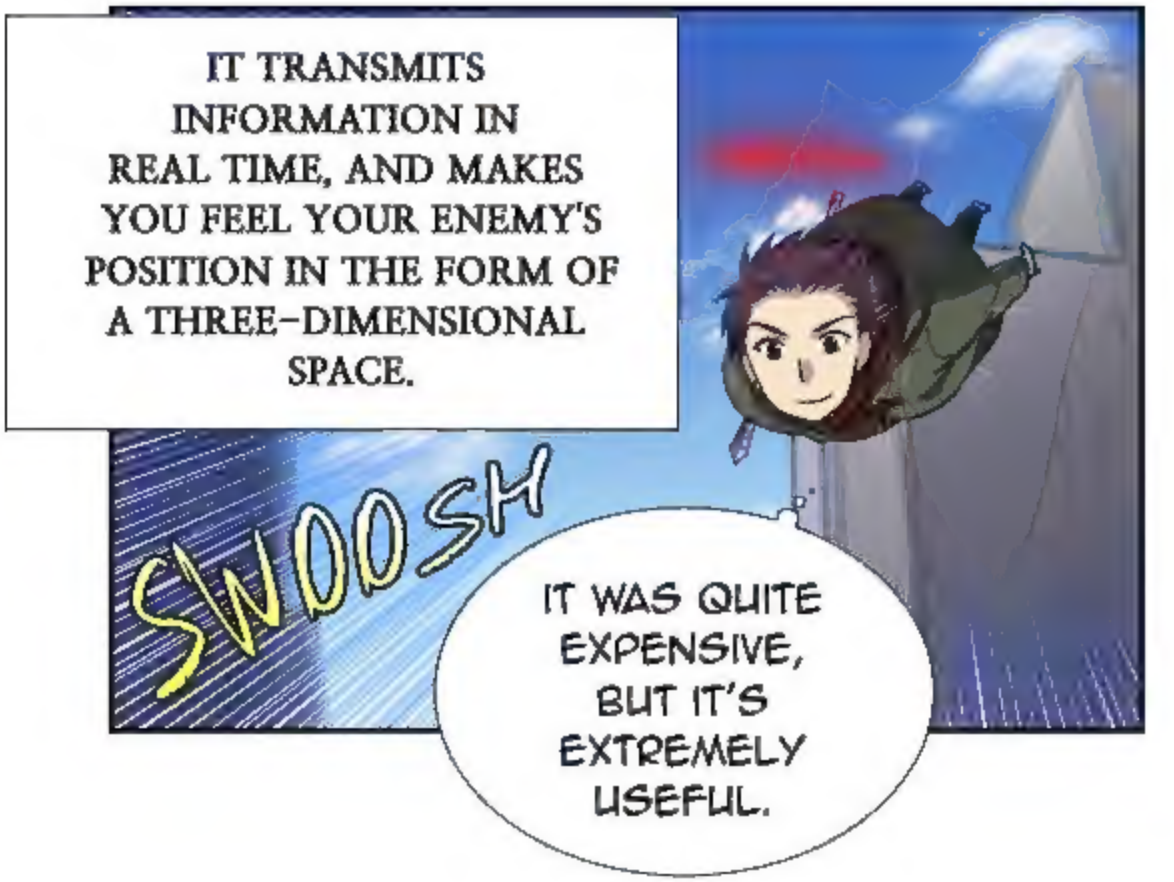
STORY BY SANGYOUNG SEONG
ILLUST BY SANG-A

〈LIVING TO THE FULLEST〉

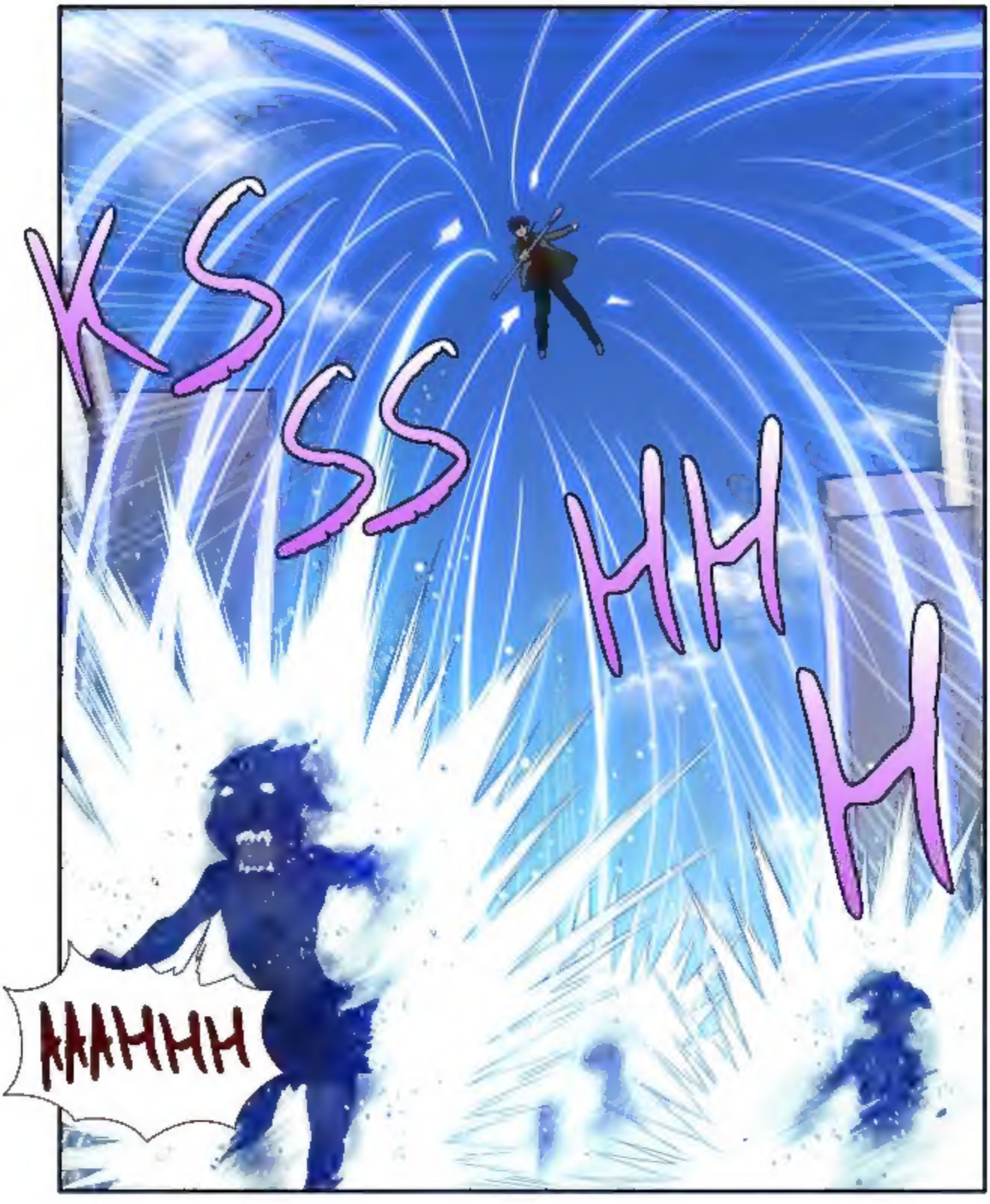
FIVE OF THEM WENT THAT WAY. GET THEM.
AH, I SEE THEM. I'LL DEAL WITH THEM.

[THE DETECTION RING]
A MAGICAL TOOL FOR FINDING ENEMIES.

TAP


IT TRANSMITS INFORMATION IN REAL TIME, AND MAKES YOU FEEL YOUR ENEMY'S POSITION IN THE FORM OF A THREE-DIMENSIONAL SPACE.
SWOOSH
IT WAS QUITE EXPENSIVE, BUT IT'S EXTREMELY USEFUL.

WHISH
INFINITELY SPINNING MAGIC ARROWS.


KSSSHHH
AAAHHH

TSSSS

WHISH

TI
P

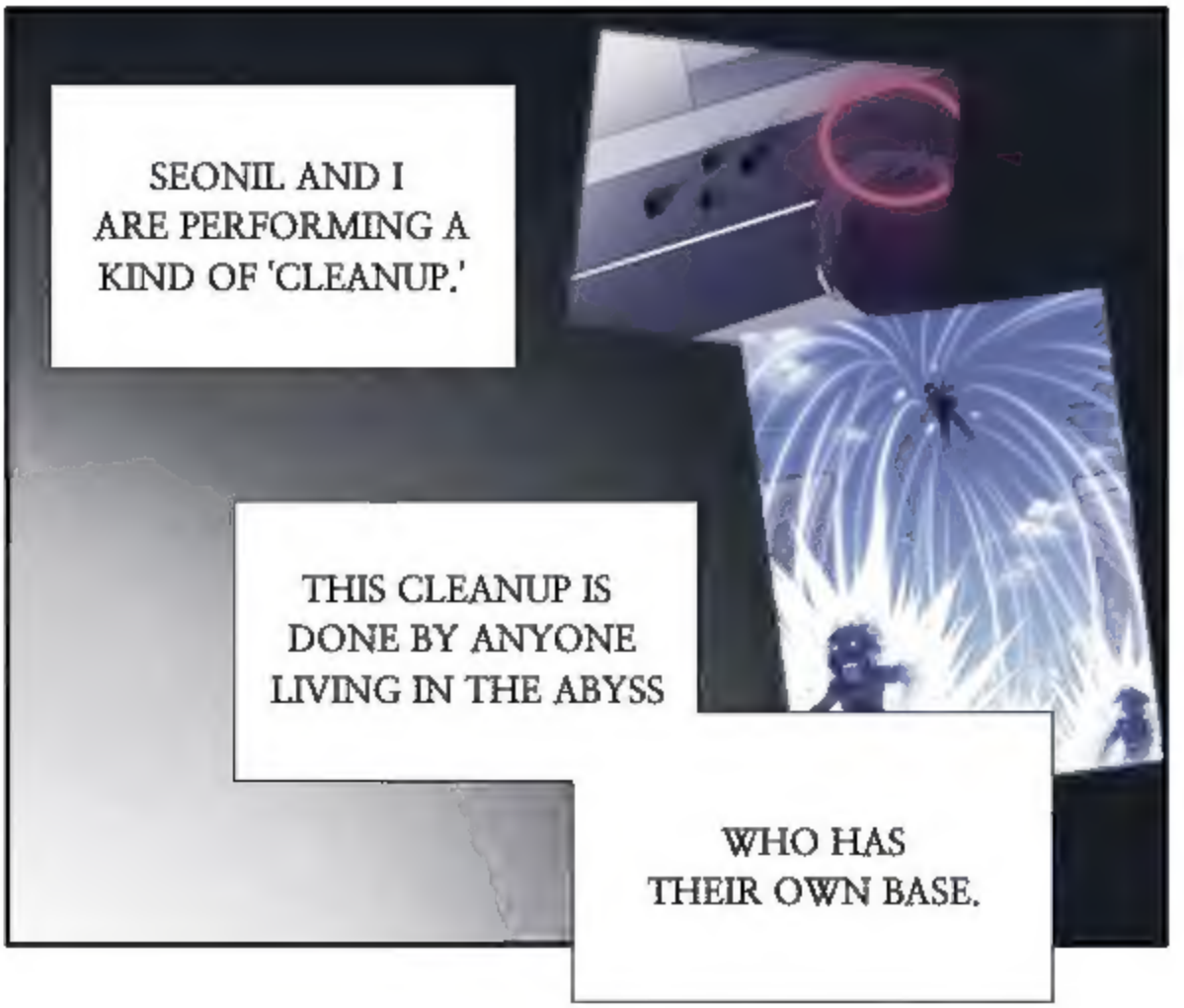
TURN
TURN

THAT'S ALL FOR OUR [CLEANING].
WE'RE ALL DONE OUR WORK FOR TODAY.

TAP

I THOUGHT THE WORLD HAD GOTTEN BETTER.
WHISH
WHY ARE THERE SO MANY OF THESE GUYS? THEY'RE LIKE COCKROACHES.

THE WORLD MAY HAVE GOTTEN BETTER, BUT ONLY VERY SLIGHTLY.
AND WHERE WOULD THESE GUYS WITH NO HUMANITY IN THEM GO JUST BECAUSE THE WORLD HAS GOTTEN BETTER?
SOME GARBAGE CAN'T BE RECYCLED.
AH... I SEE.


SEONIL AND I ARE PERFORMING A KIND OF 'CLEANUP.'
THIS CLEANUP IS DONE BY ANYONE LIVING IN THE ABYSS
WHO HAS THEIR OWN BASE.

YOU SAID THAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES THIS TOO, RIGHT?
YEAH. EVERYONE LIVING IN THE ABYSS DOES THIS.

SOME PEOPLE CATCH THESE GUYS AND USE THEM AS MATERIAL, BUT WE DON'T DO THAT.
THAT JUST SEEMS DIRTY.

UGH. GROSS...
ALL OF THOSE EVIL THOUGHTS GATHERED LIKE THAT.

IDEA POWER ISN'T SOMETHING THAT WE CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT, YOU KNOW.
IT'S JUST AS SEONIL SAID.

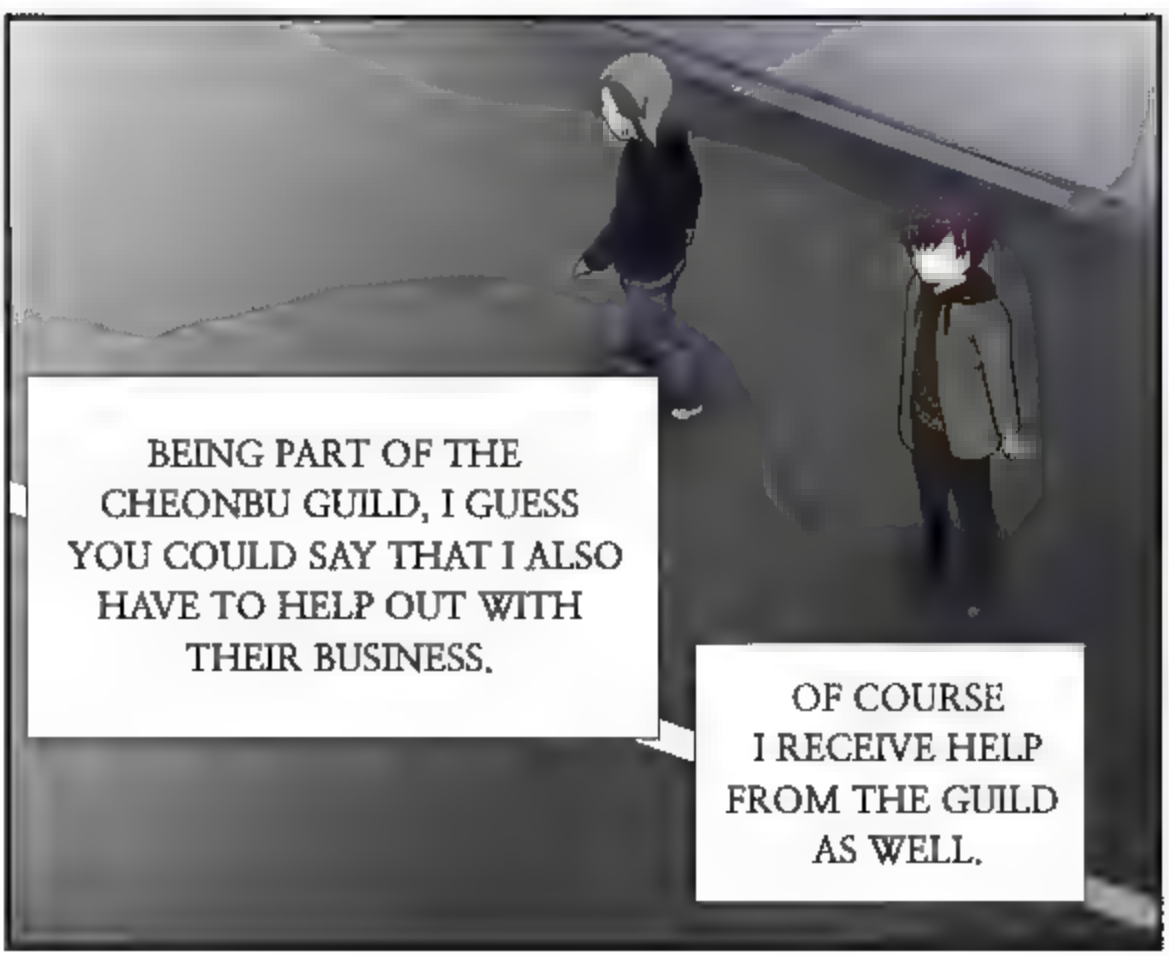
IDEA POWER IS CREATED BY GATHERING PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS TOGETHER.
IT CAN EVEN BE ADJUSTED TO CREATE A GOD.
AND EVEN IF NOT A GOD, THIS KIND OF MENTAL POWER CREATES SEVERAL THINGS.

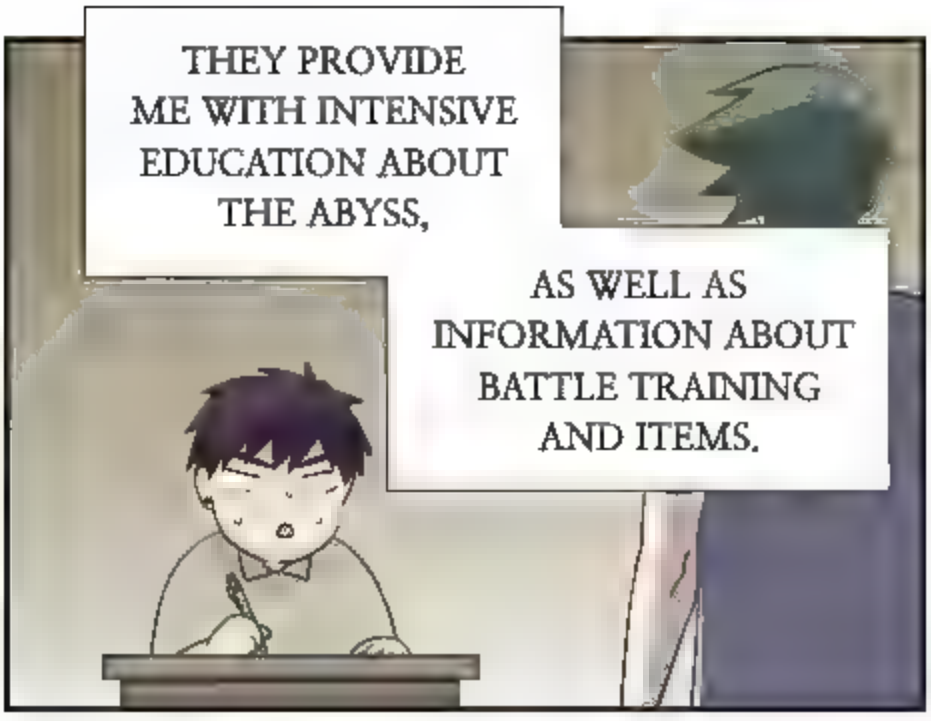
LIKE THOSE GUYS THAT WE JUST GOT RID OF.

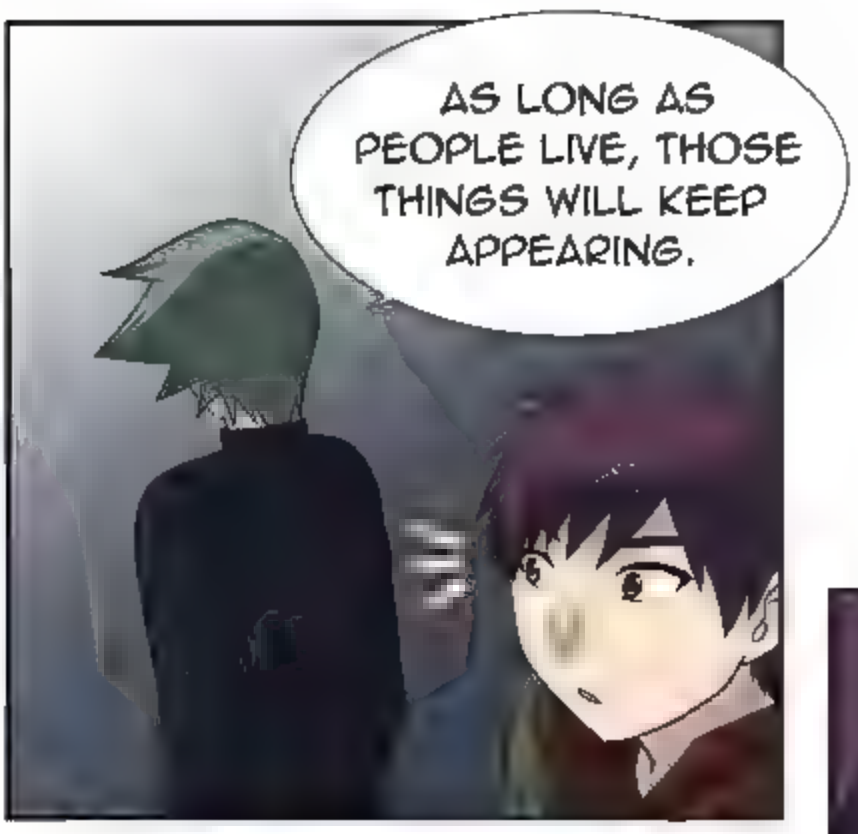
IF WE LEAVE THESE GUYS ALONE, THEY'LL KEEP GROWING AND 'MONSTERFY.'
SO WE CAN'T NOT GET RID OF THEM, RIGHT?

IMAGINE IF A CAT LIVING IN YOUR FRONT YARD COULD LATER GROW INTO A TIGER AND ATTACK YOU.

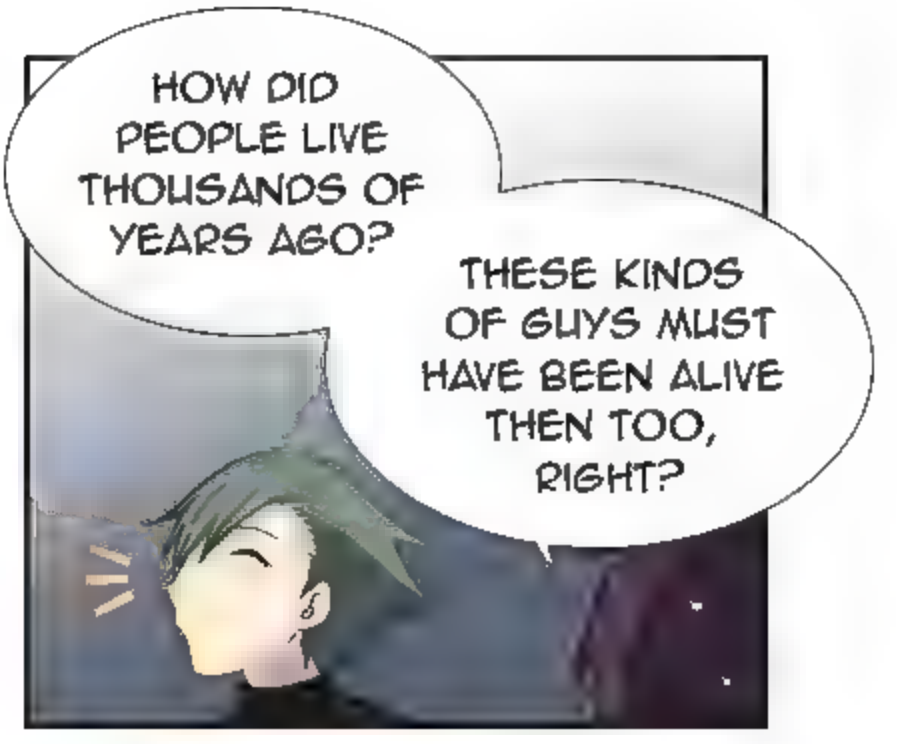
YOU'RE RIGHT.

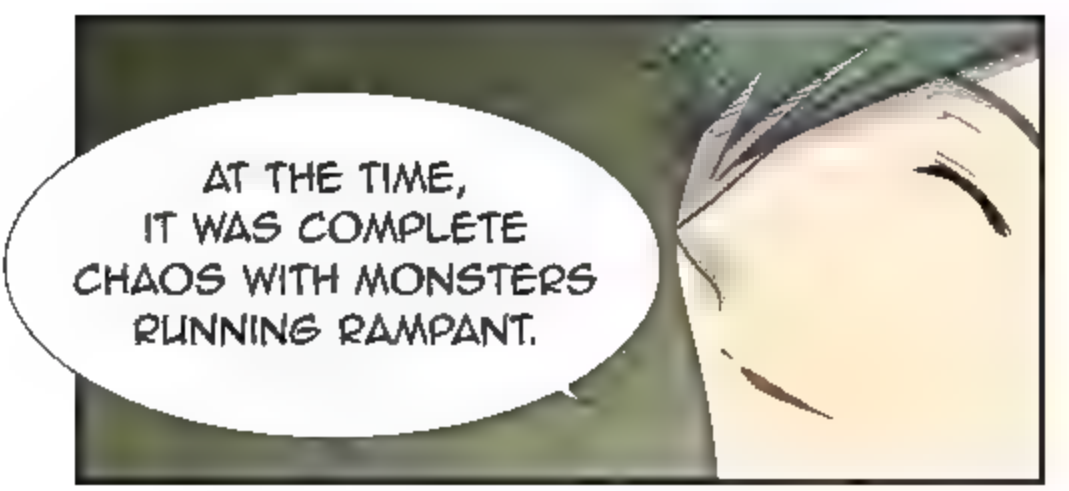

BEING PART OF THE CHEONBU GUILD, I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT I ALSO HAVE TO HELP OUT WITH THEIR BUSINESS.
OF COURSE I RECEIVE HELP FROM THE GUILD AS WELL.


THEY PROVIDE ME WITH INTENSIVE EDUCATION ABOUT THE ABYSS,
AS WELL AS INFORMATION ABOUT BATTLE TRAINING AND ITEMS.


AS LONG AS PEOPLE LIVE, THOSE THINGS WILL KEEP APPEARING.

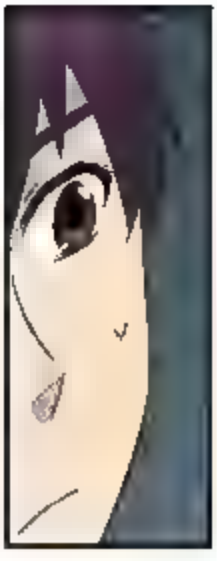
FOREVER.


HOW DID PEOPLE LIVE THOUSANDS OF YEARS AGO?
THESE KINDS OF GUYS MUST HAVE BEEN ALIVE THEN TOO, RIGHT?


AT THE TIME, IT WAS COMPLETE CHAOS WITH MONSTERS RUNNING RAMPANT.

YOU KNOW THAT FAMOUS BOOK "THE CREATION OF THE GODS"?
IT'S ACTUALLY TRUE.
THE GREAT DEMON DAJI CAUSES THE COUNTRY TO COLLAPSE,
AND THE WORLD FALLS INTO MISERY.

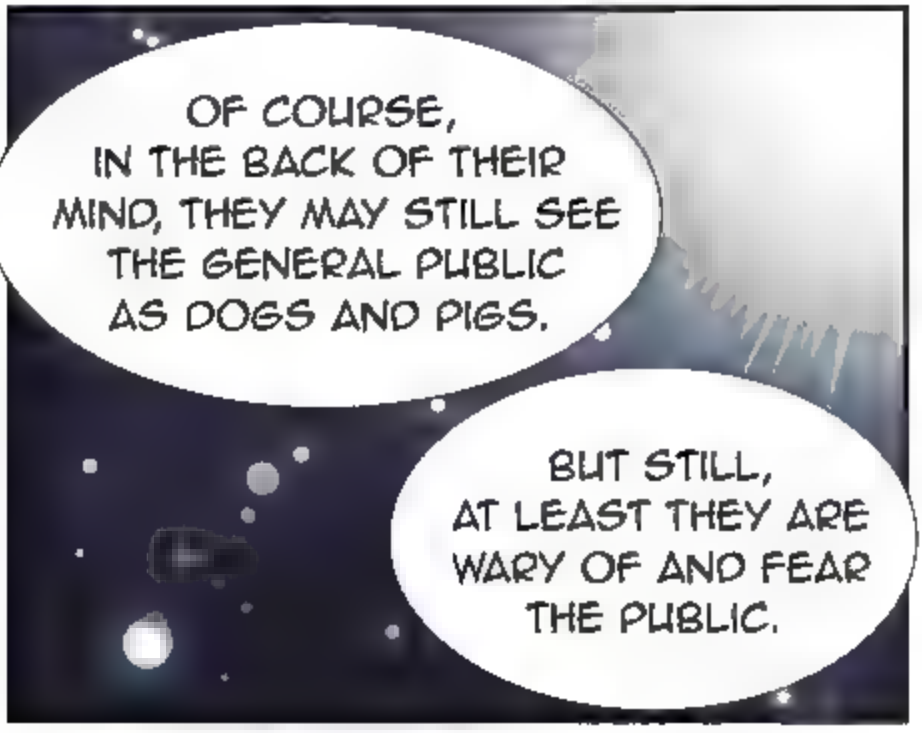
WOW, THAT'S SERIOUS.



WHAT WERE PEOPLE'S LIVES LIKE AT THE TIME?

LIVESTOCK.
WHAT DIFFERENCE IS THERE BETWEEN THEM AND PIGS OR CHICKENS BEING RAISED IN ORDER TO BE SLAUGHTERED AND EATEN?
I SEE...

STILL, IT'S DIFFERENT NOW.
BECAUSE THOSE IN POWER AT LEAST PAY ATTENTION TO HOW PEOPLE SEE THEM AND WHAT THEY THINK.


OF COURSE, IN THE BACK OF THEIR MIND, THEY MAY STILL SEE THE GENERAL PUBLIC AS DOGS AND PIGS.
BUT STILL, AT LEAST THEY ARE WARY OF AND FEAR THE PUBLIC.

COME TO THINK OF IT, THERE'S A SAYING ABOUT THIS.

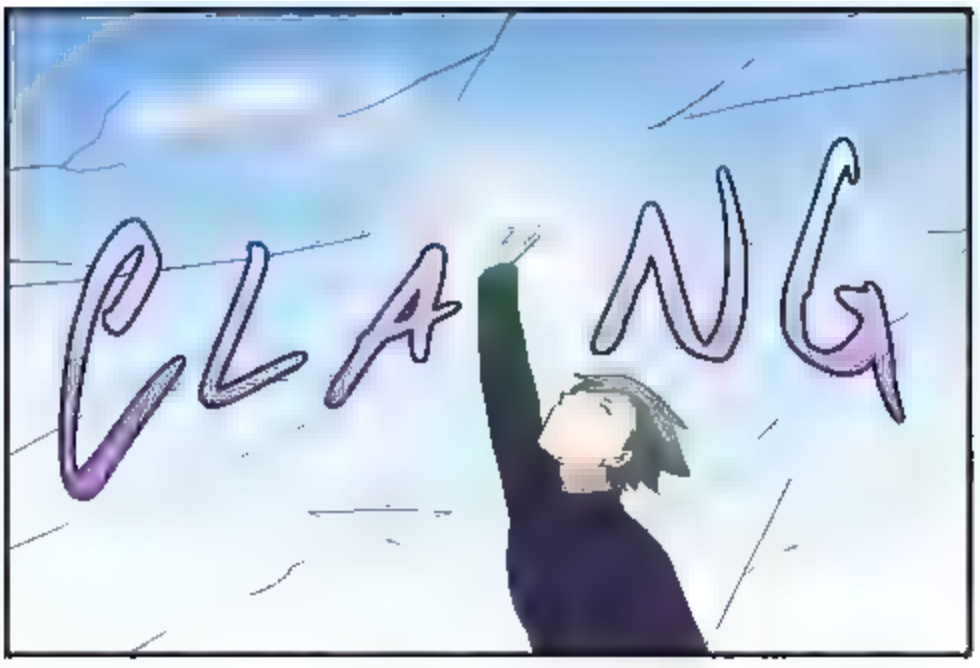
ABSOLUTE POWER CORRUPTS ABSOLUTELY.
ISN'T THAT A GREAT SAYING?

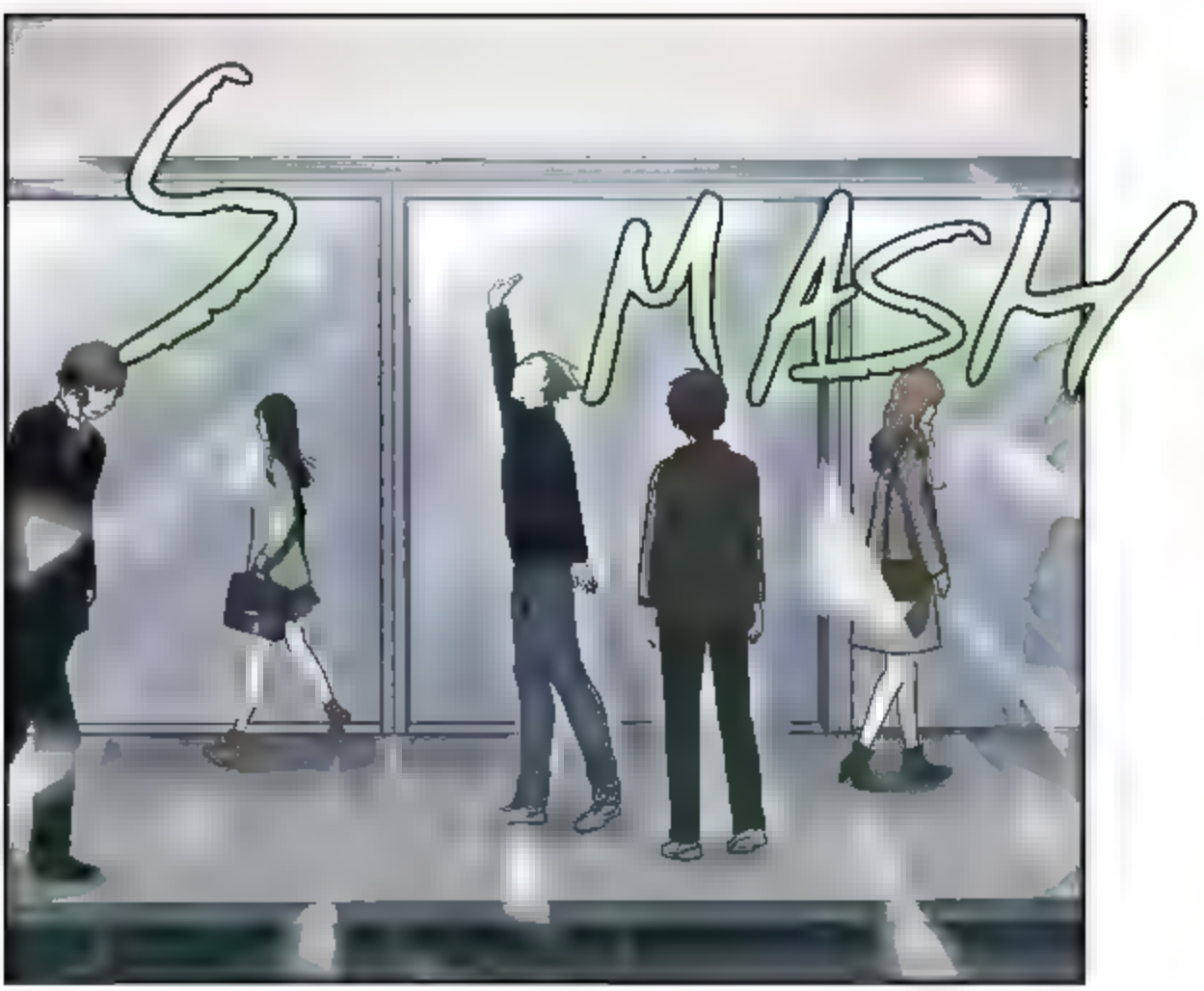
DOES THAT APPLY TO THE ABYSS TOO?

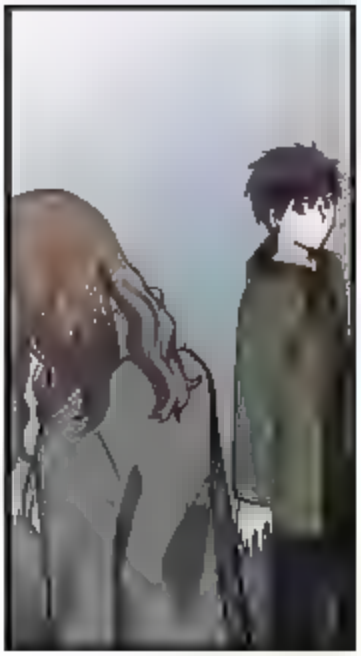
WHY WOULDN'T IT?
YOU CAN TELL FROM THE BEHAVIOR OF THE NINTH GATE, THE NINE STRONGEST ORGANIZATIONS IN THE WORLD.

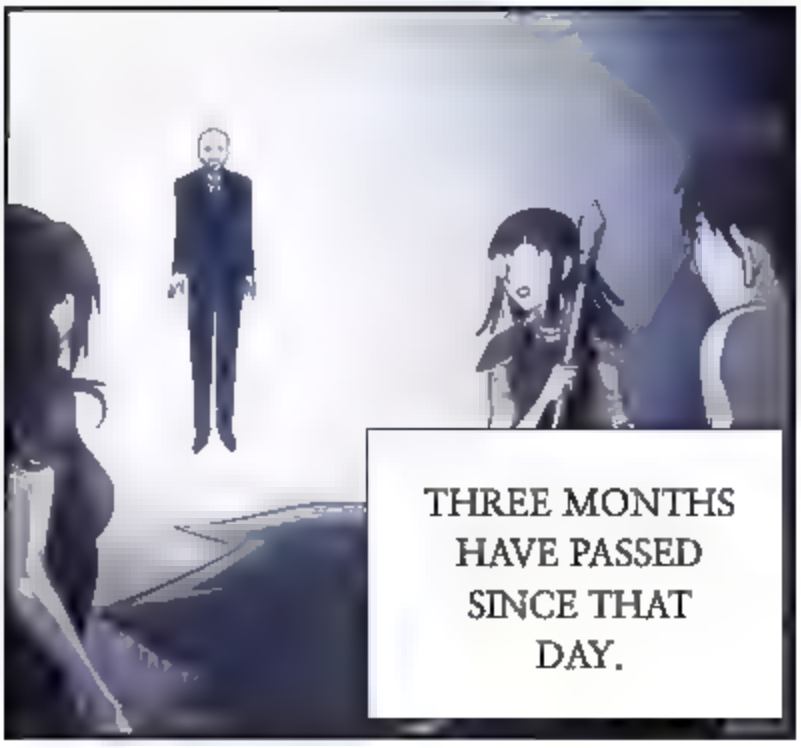
BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLOCK TOGETHER.

ENOUGH CHATTING. LET'S GO HOME.
YEAH. SURE.


CLANG


SMASH




THREE MONTHS HAVE PASSED SINCE THAT DAY.

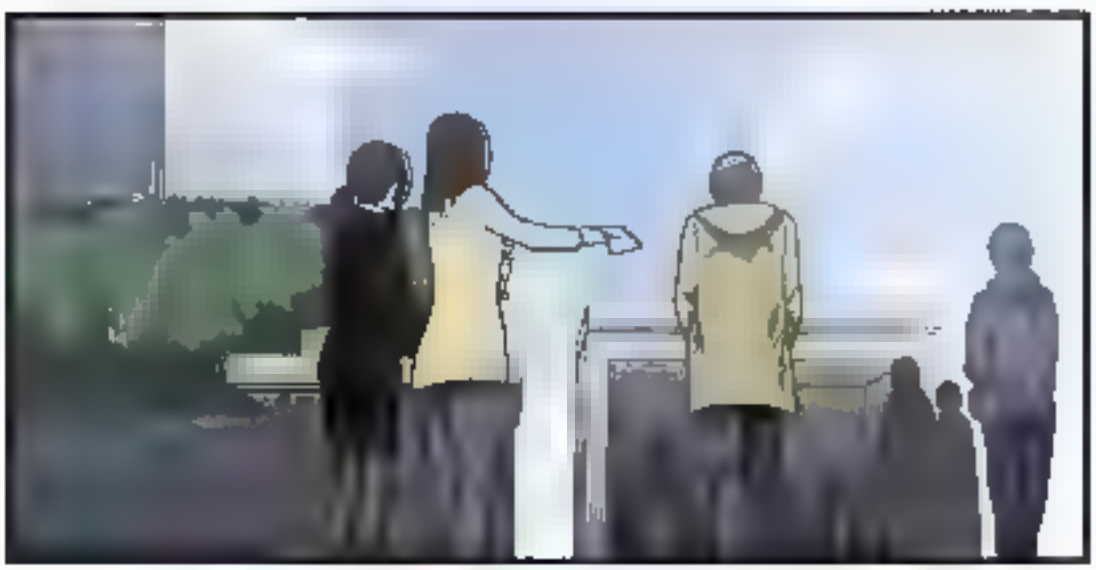
I'VE HARDLY LEVELED UP IN THE MEANTIME, BUT I DID LEARN SEVERAL ESSENTIAL THINGS INSTEAD.

STEP
LOOKING AT THE STREET MAKES ME THINK OF SOMETHING.
WHAT?
'I GUESS THE WORLD REALLY IS GETTING BETTER.'

THAT'S DEFINITELY SO.
EVEN COMPARED TO A HUNDRED YEARS AGO, THINGS ARE WAY BETTER NOW.

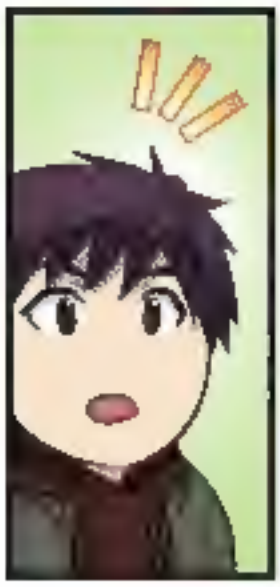
HUMANITY IS ON THE RIGHT TRACK.

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY THAT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY 'YOU COULD SAY THAT'?
ANYWAY...



PEOPLE ALL WEAR MASKS.
FIND PEACE OF MIND IN OUR 'CHURCH OF MASKS.'

SALVATION IS WITHIN YOU.
CHURCH OF MASKS?
IS IT SOME KIND OF NEW CULT?
HEY. HAVE YOU HEARD OF THE CHURCH OF MASKS?
NO, I'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT BEFORE.
THE CHURCH OF MASKS...



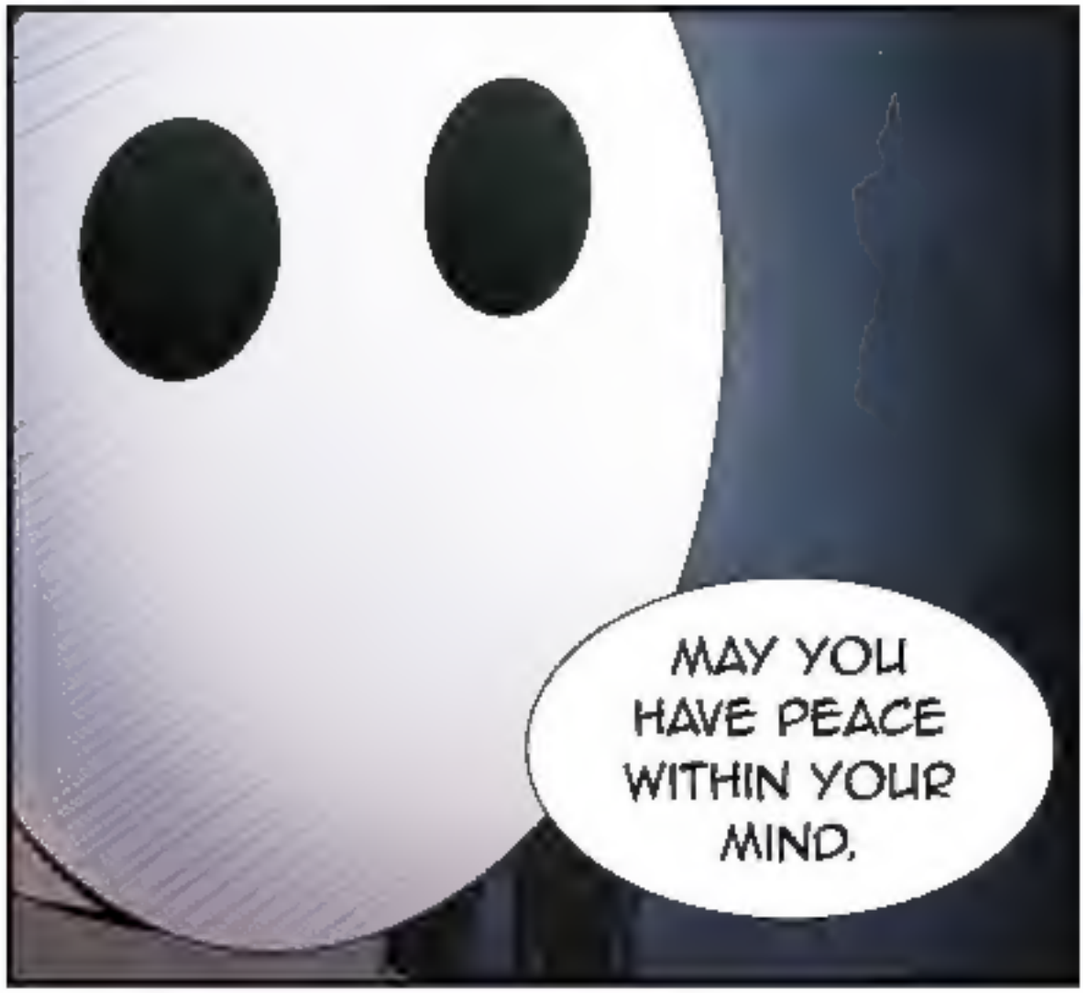
COME TO THINK OF IT, I'M CURIOUS.

DOES YOUR FAMILY MANAGE CULTS, TOO?

ARE YOU NUTS? WHY WOULD WE MANAGE SOMETHING LIKE THAT? MAYBE IF IT WERE A CULT AFFILIATED WITH THE ABYSS.

TRUE...

WE ALL WEAR MASKS IN OUR LIVES.
HOWEVER, BY WEARING MASKS, WE CAN ALSO BECOME ONE.



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